

S E C R E T

26 November 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Efforts by the KGB to recruit a Western writer during the latter's visit in the Ukraine

SOURCE : The following information was obtained from a female lecturer in a Latin American University, who is an emigre of Ukrainian parentage, a poet and a member of the international PEN club.

1. The source was in the Soviet Union from 4 June until 15 August 1969. She travelled by train from Helsinki to Leningrad, where the train was stopped for customs inspection, which was quite superficial, except for the books and manuscripts which she was carrying. She was questioned about them, but since she had with her letters of invitation from Soviet Ukrainian writers and from the Ukrainian Society for Cultural Exchanges, and explained that she was a writer and lecturer working on translations and that she was going to work on translations in the Soviet Union, nothing was taken from her.

2. In Leningrad, the source was met by Hryhori KOCHUR, a well-known Ukrainian writer from Kiev-Irpen, with whom she spent most of her time in Leningrad, visiting libraries, museums, and becoming acquainted with his friends. The source departed for Moscow by train on 7 June, three days after her arrival in Leningrad.

3. During her five days in Moscow the source visited libraries, museums and friends of KOCHUR, again in the company of KOCHUR. She was accommodated by Inturist at the Hotel Berlin. Prior to leaving Moscow, the source also traveled to Zagorsk and Arkhangelskoye. She departed by air for Kiev on 21 June 1969.

S E C R E T

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

S E C R E T

-2-

4. The source was met in Kiev at Boryspol Airport by friends whom she met during her last visit to Kiev; i.e., Ivan SWITLYCHNYY and his wife Lola, Ivan's sister Nadia SWITLYCHNA, and Halyna SEWRUK. Inturist accommodated her in Kiev at the Hotel Dnipro, where she lived until 22 June, at which time she was transferred to the House of Writers at Irpen near Kiev, where she lived until 25 July. Yuri SMOLYCH arranged for the transfer, since the source was working on translations which eventually were to be published in Kiev. Several of the source's translations were left with various individuals and institutions in Kiev, although she was given no assurance they would be published, particularly after she defended Ivan DZYUBA at a literary evening in Kiev on 7 August (see paragraph 11 below).

5. On 25 July the source made a trip to Lvov, returning to Kiev on 27 July, where she remained until 15 August, when she flew to Vienna. The source had filed an application with Inturist in Kiev on 16 June, requesting an extension of permission to stay in the Ukraine from the original seven days granted in Moscow to at least one month. As a result, she was summoned to the Kiev OVIR, where she met Roman Yakovych VASYLENKO*, who said he was with the Kiev KGB office and Chief of the OVIR.

6. VASYLENKO subsequently visited her once or twice weekly in Kiev-Irpen. He took her out dining and to the beach in Irpen. He introduced her to his "chief," Serhiy Ivanovych

*Roman Yakovych VASYLENKO, Kiev 51, Hlibova 12/14, kv. 4
Born ca. 1937. Six feet tall, high forehead, longish face, dark brown hair which is slightly curly, slim build, "fine intelligent face", has several steel teeth, elegant manners. VASYLENKO is married and has a daughter born ca. 1959. He studied history. He completed his ten-years school (desyatylitka) in Drohobych, where he lived with his parents at that time. He speaks a fine Ukrainian and is quite well versed on Ukrainian emigre affairs.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

-3-

or Serhiy Mykhailovych LNU* (source was not sure of the patronymic). VASYLENKO asked many questions about New York Ukrainian emigre intellectuals (a list of individuals about whom he asked is available in Project AERODYNAMIC files) and about her contacts in the Ukraine. He complained about Ukrainian dissidents' lack of objectivity, stating that they harp only on the negative aspects of life in the Soviet Union and are blind to the positive aspects.

7. VASYLENKO proposed collaboration between the source and the KGB, suggesting that she organize tourist groups composed of Ukrainian emigre intellectuals for travel to the Ukraine. He also suggested that she sever her contacts with the publishers of Suchasnist, and try to influence Ukrainian emigre intellectuals in New York to do the same. When the source indicated her lack of interest in VASYLENKO's proposition, he told her he was aware of the fact that she could use some more money, which he was in a position to give her if she agreed to cooperate with him. When she rebuffed his offer again, he warned her that the KGB knew she tried to smuggle illegal literature into the Soviet Union, which was an offense, but she informed him that all she brought with her was literary not illegal material and that there was no reason to threaten her or implicate individuals with whom she was in contact.

8. VASYLENKO then said that since she was not willing to cooperate with him he would like her to sign a statement to the effect that she would not reveal to anyone the nature of their conversation. The source stated that she signed such a statement, but that since she was so agitated and eager to rid herself of VASYLENKO she did not read the entire statement and is not sure exactly what she signed. In revealing this information to her friends in Kiev, she was told that many other tourists were compelled to do the same thing.

*Serhiy Ivanovich or Mykhailovych lnu. VASYLENKO's superior. d.o.b. ca. 1909, 5 feet 8 inches tall, stocky build, has a "thick pink nose and pink face," dark brown hair.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

-4-

9. VASYLENKO told the source he knew she was about to depart for a visit to Lvov, and that, strictly on a personal basis, he would like to advance her some money, since he knew she was in need of spending money. She was not anxious to accept anything from him, but in order not to agitate him further, she finally agreed to "borrow" 50 rubles from him. On her return from Lvov, she tried to return the money to VASYLENKO but he refused to accept it, telling her to forget all about it. Prior to her departure from Kiev for the West, she gave the 50 rubles to her friends in Kiev and told them it was "KGB" money. Her friends treated it as a joke, stating they were happy to be financed from the KGB budget.

10. On 26 July, while the source was visiting in Lvov, her host, Rostyslav BRATUN, had promised to drive her to Kosiv. The trip was cancelled at the last minute. It seemed BRATUN's car was suddenly inoperative. She later was told by BRATUN that he was ordered to develop car trouble, because Ivan DZYUBA was at that time vacationing in Kosiv and the authorities were not anxious for the source to meet with him. She subsequently met with DZYUBA on several occasions after he returned to Kiev. VASYLENKO came from Kiev to see source in Lvov, and in his chauffeured car took her on a trip to Pochayiv and Kremyanets.

11. A literary evening at which the source was to read some of her works was scheduled to take place at the Union of Ukrainian Writers in Kiev on 7 August. Two days prior to the event, Yuri SMOLYCH telephoned the source, stating that unfortunately it would be impossible to hold the literary evening at the Union due to renovations which were in progress. He suggested instead a restaurant. The source refused to read in a restaurant, and SMOLYCH next offered the premises of the Society for Cultural Contacts with Ukrainians Abroad, of which he is an officer. The source reproached SMOLYCH for changing the plans at the last minute, stating that invitations had been sent to various individuals giving the address of the Writers Union as the location. SMOLYCH apologized for the inconvenience, and said the best he could do was to notify as many of the individuals as he could about the change. The source finally agreed to read at the Society's premises.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

-5-

12. That very same evening, source's friends began to spread the news about the change of location for the event, and as a result, contrary to the hopes of the authorities, the attendance at the literary evening on 7 August was much larger than expected. According to the source, there were over 350 in attendance, a full house, among them Ivan DZYUBA, Ivan SWITLYCHNYY, Nadia SWITLYCHNA, Hryhori KOCHUR, Mykola LUKASH, Ivan DRACH, Vitaly KOROTYCH, Dmytro PAVLYCHKO, Yuri SMOLYCH, Leonid NOVYCHENKO and Oleksiy POLTORATSKY, all popular Ukrainian writers. SMOLYCH presided.

13. There was a minor incident, believed by the source and her friends to be a deliberate effort on the part of the authorities to disperse the crowd. When SMOLYCH proceeded to introduce the source, a voice outside of the hall shouted that somebody was being attacked and was bleeding. There was some commotion in the hall, but no one left, except for two individuals, who the source and her friends decided were planted among those in attendance for the purpose of leading others from the hall. When things quieted down and SMOLYCH introduced her to the audience, the source read a short prepared speech which she brought with her, in which she referred to Ivan DZYUBA as a "polemicist-patriot, an individual of indisputable moral integrity." DZYUBA, "radiated with satisfaction," while SMOLYCH, NOVYCHENKO and POLTORATSKY scowled.

14. Following her speech, the source recited several of her poems, some of them quite controversial by Soviet standards. When she completed her reading, SMOLYCH and his friends wanted to whisk her away, but she announced that she would answer questions from the floor. Those were soon forthcoming. Among other things, someone asked whether a poetess in the Western country where she lives could make a living on writing poetry alone. She replied that she could not, but that others could, particularly those with good connections. Mykola LUKASH then commented from the floor that, "in other words, people like our KORNIYCHUK might be very well off" in that country. The inference was very obvious and the audience applauded and laughed heartily. At this point, SMOLYCH stated that it was time to leave the premises and the crowd dispersed.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

-6-

15. It was evident from the very beginning that the authorities, through SMOLYCH, wanted to cancel the literary event completely, or at least to render it as insignificant as possible, and they were unhappy with the evening's success. SMOLYCH and NOVYCHENKO had difficulty hiding their annoyance. SMOLYCH grumbled something to the effect that now he was not so sure what would happen with the source's works which she had left to be published in the Ukraine.

□ □ SB/PO/M
from AECASSOWARY/29

S E C R E T